

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Governing Board Members

FROM: Deena Reppen, Deputy Executive Director, Regulation and Public Affairs

DATE: January 4, 2011

SUBJECT: A Resolution of the Governing Board of the South Florida Water Management District to authorize entering into an Amendment to extend the term of the Agreement with the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) by 10 years for Implementation of Dispersed Water Management Projects in addition to Agricultural/Stormwater Best Management Practices in the Northern Everglades and Estuaries Protection Area and add funding to be disbursed in increments not-to-exceed \$2,500,000 annually over an anticipated 10 year period of which \$350,000 is budgeted for FY11 from dedicated funds – Save Our Everglades Trust Fund (SOETF) – and will be advanced to FDACS prior to SOETF reimbursement, with the remainder subject to future budget approvals for fiscal years 2012 through 2021 providing an effective date. (Contract Number 4600001935-A02)

Background

The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS), in conjunction with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) and District, is charged with implementing Best Management Practices (BMPs) on agricultural lands within the boundaries described in the Northern Everglades and Estuaries Protection Act (NEEPA), Chapter 373.4595, F.S. The original agreement consisted of multiple sub-projects that are designed to improve agricultural water quality and to detain and/or reuse surface water on agricultural lands within the hydrologic boundaries of the basins covered in NEEPA. This amendment consists of sub-regional water management project(s) that are designed to retain sub-regional runoff and improve nutrient water quality on agricultural lands with priority given to projects within the Fisheating Creek (FEC) sub-watershed. The Lake Okeechobee Watershed Construction Project Phase II Technical Plan recommends that feasibility studies be conducted at the sub-watershed level to further define the best mix of surface storage and water quality improvement features that are most suitable in a given sub-watershed. The studies should also identify locations for siting these features and develop preliminary engineering design and cost estimates for the identified features. Following these guidelines, the District began the development of the Fisheating Creek Sub-Watershed Feasibility Report in 2008.

As such, the FEC Basin is the first Northern Everglades sub-watershed developing an implementation plan to achieve the FEC Basin water storage and nutrient reduction goals. Implementation of dispersed water management projects in conjunction with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service FEC Special Wetland Reserve Project would make significant progress in achieving the FEC Basin water storage and nutrient reduction goals. These goals will be met through implementation of projects that (a) can be implemented in a short period of time; (b) that afford the opportunity for larger amounts of water retention/storage and reductions in nutrient loading to the lake and estuary; (c) have an existing mixed system of drained wetlands and pasture lands on the site (restoring the hydrology to the wetlands and their floodplain will reduce nutrient loading and provide other environmental benefits such as habitat improvements); and (d) have existing connections, or the opportunity to create connections to

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the Lake, Caloosahatchee, and/or access to FEC discharges which affords distinctive multi-operational scenarios (e.g. storing or treating FEC excess water; storing and treating Lake Okeechobee excess water; treating water before reaching the Caloosahatchee River).

The potential project(s) will be selected FDACS and reviewed by the District following execution of the amendment to the Interagency Agreement (contract). The total cost of the agreed-upon project(s) shall not exceed \$2.5 million annually over a ten-year contract period.

How this helps meet the District's 10-year Strategic Plan:

The amendment will support the projects listed in the District's Annual Work Plan that are linked to the 10-Year Strategic Plan and is the most efficient utilization of resources to achieve program goals.

Funding Source: Save Our Everglades Trust Fund

This Board item impacts what areas of the District, both resource areas and geography:

The Resource Areas impacted by the referenced amendment are Everglades Restoration, Operations and Regulation and Public Affairs.

What concerns could this Board item raise?

The amendment first year funding is budgeted in FY11, future year funding is subject to Governing Board approval. Should it not be approved, the ability to achieve Dispersed Water Management and Northern Everglades Program goals will be negatively impacted.

Why should the Governing Board approve this item?

The approval of the referenced amendment is critical to continuing the established Northern Everglades agency collaboration in the most efficient manner to achieve the Northern Everglades water quality improvement and water storage/retention goals, which is critical to the health of the watersheds.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me at ext. 6232.

DR/bw